

Primula

by Hawkflight7

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Summary: She was created for this mission, to make sure it succeeds, no matter the cost.

## 1. Chapter 1

**\*\*Primula - 1\*\***

**\*\*Summary:** She was created for this mission, to make sure it succeeds, no matter the cost.\*\*

**\*\*This is what happens when I stumble across pairings I wouldn't have thought of myself. I have to figure out dynamics cause Curiosity said so. Now, let's begin this weird journey. Oh, and play a game of find-the-bunny-references 'cause while I was writing they kept sneaking their way in.\*\***

Her gloved fingers dug into the coffee-cream colored fur of her skirt as she waited, one heel tapping repeatedly against the floor as her mind raced.

It would be at least another minute before he entered the office, judging by the silence that had descended over the courtyard from outside after the speech was done. She could just leave before then, he said he would understand if she decided she couldn't go through with this. But this is the sort of thing she had trained for - partially, anyway. The Academy trained hunters and huntresses - who went out on a variety of missions, - not spies; she certainly hadn't taken any special training in that department. She wasn't entirely sure how many students did, it's not the sort of thing they were usually asked to do. Especially by the-

The sound of the elevator sliding open made her freeze for a moment. "You came." A voice filled the now silent room, foot steps echoing soon after.

Velvet took in a breath of air as she uncurled her fingers from her skirt, settling them in her lap, and stopping her foot from resuming it's former thumping. "Yes." She watched as Ozpin sat in the chair behind his desk, clasping his hands together on top of the wood as he faced her, before speaking,

"You came prepared." He gave a small inclination of his head, obviously referring to the outfit she had made after accepting this mission a few months back, along with the new weapon she currently carried on her back. Not that anyone would give it a second glance or think for even a second that it could do anything harmful to them; which would be a fair assumption, unless she was 'wielding' it. "I know I gave you ample time to get everything ready, but if you still need more time or have decided you don't want to do this you may leave. I won't hold it against you."

Had he heard her from inside the elevator? Or did she still look nervous? It didn't really matter, since he had seen through her supposedly calm demeanor anyway. Still, this was something she had to do, for all the faunus out there. "You said if I were to take this mission that it would start today." Though, he had told her about the mission months ago, half way through her second semester at this school to be exact.

"I did. I wanted to check that you were still up for it first, though. Before I completed the last arrangement for your long-term assignment, to insure that nobody will know about your connections to the Academy. That's not including your team of course, but all the missions they receive should keep them away from your own."

Velvet gave a nod of her head, confirming that she understood. He had explained the mission in detail when he first suggested it to her. Unfortunately none of her team would be joining her, this was going to be a solo mission; something that had concerned Coco when she brought it up with her leader. She had left out many details though, considering the nature of the mission. It was covert, so all she really told Coco beyond the basics is that when she saw her next after today was to treat her as whoever she appeared to be, rather than a teammate; not to use her name.

And when she left this room Ozpin would destroy her individual documents concerning the Academy, strike her name off others, replace them with another; the name of an exchange student that would be joining her team while she was away. She was actually rather curious about them, but she didn't think it would be right for her to ask. Ozpin would make sure they fit in with the team, and that they were a faunus so not all details had to be changed in the team's papers. He would be the only one that knew her true mission and that she was connected to the Academy still, as her teachers were more-or-less given the same info as she had given Coco.

As for the students she had attended the Academy with... she doubted they would remember her. She had pretty much melted into the backdrop, even with her bunny ears. Velvet had only ever had significant interactions with her team. Besides, she would be wearing a mask soon enough; that's why she hadn't bothered to cut her hair or get colored contacts.

"I'm fully prepared and ready to infiltrate the White Fang. Once I'm

in I'll give you any information I have access to regarding their movements, and anything else that will help neutralize the terrorist organization as quickly as possible."

There was a moment of silence before Ozpin gave a nod of his head. "Have you already said goodbye to your team, then? I trust you know that you can't be friendly with them after today. You're going to have to create the illusion that you are dedicated to the White Fang."

"I understand. I won't do anything that would compromise the mission."

"Good." Ozpin gave another nod of his head. "I'll take care of everything on my end. The White Fang are actively recruiting tonight with one of their events. I trust you know where to find them and will figure out the exact time they are holding it."

"I'll be there," she assured him.

"Right. Thank you for taking on this mission. I know it's not the most luxurious for someone in your position. Just trust your judgment and if things get out of hand know that you can come back here at any time. Good luck."

"Thank you, sir." Velvet stood up shortly after the words left her lips, turning and walking to the elevator. Once the doors shut behind her however -the elevator moving down without her pressing a button - Velvet's gaze moved up to the hatch above her. With a few well-placed jumps and a kick the hatch was open and she was out of the elevator, the small tunnel it traveled in creating a effect similar to a vacuum around her. So her hair flew out around her as if she was caught in a strong wind. She closed the hatch, making sure it was secure before turning to face the east wall.

The moment she saw the top of the vent, she jumped for it, sliding in hands first - which was the only way this could have possibly worked. She really should have put more thought into how she was going to get from Ozpin's office and Vale without being detected considering the poof-like effect of her skirt. But she had made it to the office just fine in her new outfit; so she hadn't considered that getting out would be more difficult.

Velvet crawled through the tight space easily enough, as she did becoming more concerned with the belt than the skirt; but she couldn't exactly leave it out of the attire when it was the one place for her to store her dust. She finally stopped when she came to her destination after traversing the maze of vents. With one gloved hand she used her aura to knock the bolts from two of the corners, before slipping out and falling to the ground beside the building.

She stood up, dusting off the bits of grass from her clothes before turning to the vent and shooting the bolts back into place with the force of her aura. It's something she had experimented with for a short time while making her new weapon; to test what effects would work best with it. Though, it hadn't really made it onto her potential forms of attack or defense for that matter.

Velvet took a moment to look at the back of the Academy before turning and disappearing into the forest before she could be spotted

by some bored student listening to a lecture or anyone that might happen to look out a window. She ran through the forest until she reached the city of Vale, slowing down her stride to a more casual walk.

It was still bright out, too early for the White Fang to begin to gather. Though, she would need to go and figure out the exact time to be there so she wasn't late. She had a pretty good idea of where they would be holding such an event, but she wanted to confirm that first as well. If she missed the meeting just because she didn't know where it was being held... well, that would be a pretty crummy way to start her mission.

All of this would - thankfully - require that she goes to a section of town where no one was likely to have seen her before - not that she thought that anyone would really recognize her. So she could begin to use the background she had come up with for the mission. That she was new to the area, the town, had been living in small towns outside of the cities for most of her life. It was the sufficient basic details most people asked about in casual conversation, and would begin to paint the new image she had made for herself effectively.

So she traveled to the part of town that was known to house mostly faunus; the poor side. Or as most cops called it, the bad side of town.

The bell sounded when she opened the door to a small cafe, eyes turning to her and staying for another second or so before the customers turned back to whatever they had been doing: sipping coffee while reading the news, eating a pastry, or talking with 'friends' in hushed voices. She ignored the looks she was given for her outfit - looking expensive compared to their own clothes - walking up to the cashier, a pilchard faunus. "One order of GalÃ£o Coffee, please."

The gills just beneath the faunus' jaw opened for a moment even though there was no water in the air. After that one second of silence though he nodded, and the group to her right resumed their conversation.

Velvet gave a smile, handing over the money for the coffee before finding an empty seat - not a terribly difficult feat. She sat next to a window, looking out at a few young faunus playing across the street. They seemed to be pretending that the cracks in the sidewalk spewed lava or something, as they were avoiding them as they hopped around, as if playing hopscotch. Even though they were smiling she could feel her lips curling down into a frown.

They were growing up to be hated or feared thanks to the White Fang. It was hardly surprising that they weren't playing with a single toy. An older faunus could intimidate an employee of a human-run store into selling them because of the terrorist organization, but no one was going to take pity on the children and just give them one or let them into the shop in the first place. The White Fang weren't helping the lives of any faunus, they were being a hindrance.

Maybe that's why that group in the cafe had gone silent when she ordered her drink, because they didn't agree with the White Fang. There could be only one other reason why they had stopped in their

conversation, which meant she might just see them at the event tonight.

The clink of glass on wood made her turn her head and she offered up a smile to the cashier. "Thank you," she said, before turning to look down at her coffee; specifically at the foam on top, forming the letters of an address and the numbers beneath it showing the time for the event.

Velvet took her straw and swirled it through the foam, so it became a jumble of letters and numbers that no longer made sense after she had the information memorized. She hadn't been far off in her guess at the location, but it was good to know she wouldn't be walking into an empty warehouse tonight.

Once the letters and numbers had completely disintegrated into the coffee she took a sip from her drink, gaze straying back out the window as she waited for night to fall.

If everything went well tonight she shouldn't have any trouble with becoming a member of the White Fang, the sort that was above being a foot soldier or someone that they would need to train. The fact that she could already fight well with - and without - dust were things that she hoped would let her rise through the ranks quickly. So she could get to the sort of information needed to take the White Fang down or at the very least slow down their current plans. Which from the news appeared to be collecting dust.

A store had been hit just last night, From Dust 'Till Dawn. She suspected she would be put on a group that was doing that at first; it seemed simple enough work for a new member, but she would only know about the store she was targeting, and if all the stores she specifically hit weren't coming through with the required dust she would be suspected of treason. So if that was the case-

No. Whether it was the case or not she wouldn't be able to send anything useful to Ozpin until she got to a useful position or was put in a group working on something more secretive than their attacks on Dust shops. One could hope anyway.

She really did want to pull the rug out from the White Fang and watch them fall; so they wouldn't hurt the faunus that weren't apart of their organization so much. So that her species could recreate an organization that was peaceful when it came to their protests. So they didn't make the same mistakes as the White Fang.

As long as she didn't make any mistakes of her own that is. It's not like she was the only faunus at the Academy. Ozpin could have asked at least a dozen other students to do what she is doing now, but he chose her. Had said so that day he came to her, that she was the one that came to mind for it. Which made sense - she guessed - it's not like she went out a lot. People would believe she was new, that she had never been at the Academy; not everyone learned to fight at them. She certainly hadn't gotten mixed up in any White Fang activity before or even after becoming a student. Unlike some faunus at the Academy... who had ended up in the middle of one of their 'protests' while out in town.

She finished her coffee, leaving the glass on the table when she got up and walked outside, the children long gone now, but even though

the sun had slipped beneath the horizon and the broken moon had risen it was still an hour before the meeting would take place.

But there were faunus like her - who hadn't been seen by the White Fang - attending the Academy. Ozpin could have used any of those remaining for his efforts. She may have accepted this mission - and she wanted to succeed, she did; but... there were faunus that had been studying for longer at the Academy. Shouldn't he have gone to them first? One must have specialized in the sort of work this mission entailed.

She just wasn't entirely sure if she could do some of the things that might be asked of her once she was a member of the White Fang. With the new image they had created, they were quickly showing they had no limits. She was really starting to hope she was put on a dust-raiding team and not something more deadly.

Ozpin must have had a reason for selecting her for this mission, for whatever reason; she should just trust his judgement. Like she would need to trust her own for this mission.

"...It is certainly tragic what happened at the Schnee Corporation. Well, we hope to see you again tomorrow with more news. This is the evening night crew, signing off-"

Velvet stopped in her tracks at the voice of the woman coming from the television, sitting outside an electronic store. The evening news was done with? But... Oh, carrot sticks.

She was moving again just a second after realizing she was late. To the meeting, to her goal. If Professor Ozpin ever found out that she was late just because she had been questioning his judgement on her... No; no he would never find out, because she wasn't going to write about it in her report - it would be her first alteration, the only one she ever made, hopefully.

Velvet was walking quickly when she turned into an alley, ignoring the pounding music and flashing lights coming from the building to her right; near the edge of the warehouse district. With hardly anyone out on the street the sound of her heels connecting with the concrete was rather loud in the otherwise quiet night air; that's probably how they first noticed her.

The pair of drunks that had been standing outside the club, she could hear them behind her, thinking they would continue down the sidewalk rather than follow her down the alley. "Hey there!" she stopped and turned at the shout, frowning at the human as they stumbled toward her. "Where you going, hot buns? Back door? If you work here why don't you and me go to the hotel across the street and you can make a few extra for the night?"

She could feel her cheeks burn and only hoped there wasn't enough light for this man to see it; or his buddy that had been attracted down the alley by the sound of this one's voice. It wasn't very difficult to realize they thought she worked at the strip club whose alley she was in. Because she was a faunus, and it was a \_faunus\_ strip club. She swore these were the only sort of humans she disliked, coming into such an establishment run by faunus and taking advantage of them because they were desperate for the money.

Velvet turned - intent on continuing down the alley - when a hand closed around her wrist, pulling her back towards them. "I was talkin' to you sweet cheeks." A hand planted itself firmly on her ass and she very nearly yelped from the unexpected - and unwanted - attention. "Come on. Don't bunnies go at it for hours? I'm sure you can service me and my friend."

"Please, let go. I'm late, and-"

When she tried to just casually tug her hand away the man's grip tightened. "Well, if you're late there goes your pay for that hour, right? You can make double that with us."

"Triple that meager pay if you can do us both at once," the other joined in now, she could hear him coming up behind her..

Her ears twitched. She could hear two other voices as well, not too far away, in the direction of the warehouses. Velvet breathed deeply through her nose, noting that while one was human the other was a faunus, that could be a part of the White Fang. From the sounds of their footsteps they were heading in this direction. They weren't too far from the corner and-

The other human pressed a hand to her hip, leaning towards her and making some lewd suggestion she decided she never wanted to hear ever again for the rest of her life. If a member of the White Fang saw her in such a position they definitely wouldn't take her seriously if she told them she wanted to join, that she could do more than just load a truck with stolen dust or otherwise. There was really only one thing she could do.

"You listenin' to me, honey bunny?" The man's breath reeked of alcohol as he leaned in closer, mouth maybe an inch from her skin now. Just that fact made her skin crawl, a shiver running down her spine before she reminded herself that she needed to act, not be disgusted by what these two were saying.

Velvet leaned forward just enough to get some distance from the one that was closer before ramming the back of her skull into his face. There was a shocked yell filling her ears immediately afterward, that turned quickly into a pained scream as she grabbed his hand from her ass, twisting his arm around before shoving him to the ground - he had let go of her wrist the moment she struck him.

She turned on her heel to face the other drunk loser just as he snapped at her, "You fuckin' bitch! We're not going to play nicely wit-" He went flying before he could finish his sentence when she kicked him in the chest, colliding with the wall of the J. R. Club.

"I'm going to make you bleed, slut!" The first one was up again, throwing a fist towards her now.

Velvet stepped back so she was no longer in the path of his punch. She raised her left leg, curling it as she turned, striking him in the groin with her knee a second later. He fell to the ground in a groaning heap, clutching at his groin.

She could feel the gaze of the faunus on her, along with whoever their human companion was, but since they weren't shouting for the

cops she felt she had made the right choice.

And when one of them spoke - she couldn't tell which from the voice alone - she was positive that the faunus was with the White Fang. "A fitting little punishment for them. You're lucky to have known how to fight, most of the girls working in there probably don't. They would have had to run from not one, but two perverts if their shift ended at this hour, and they probably wouldn't have made it very far." There was a pause. "They're polluting the air, just end them. It's not like this is going to be a lesson for them. Or do you think rage-filled faunus rapists is something the world needs?"

Her ears twitched as she stared down at the human in front of her. Were they being serious? It didn't completely sound like they were; more like the comment was made off-hand. Like they didn't care if she killed them or not, but... he wasn't wrong. When they attacked another faunus later they would be much more violent if she let them walk away. Even so...

"Kill them," another voice joined the first, this time more demanding. As if they were going to kill them if she didn't. "They're vermin compared to the other humans, they need to be exterminated like the pests they are."

That hadn't been a suggestion, and from the tone of his voice he expected it to be carried out right away. Then, that must have been the faunus, and the one that had spoken earlier was the human.

And she... didn't have a choice. Unless she wanted to run back to the Academy without ever really starting her mission. A failure. Something for the others to laugh at.

Velvet barely stopped herself from taking in a deep breath as she bent down, grabbing onto the man's ears so she could bring his head up and smash his nose in with her knee, sending the bone straight into his brain. The body fell to the ground when she let go, turning to face the one still laying against the wall, just coming back to the world as he stared at her.

"No, no. Please no, I won't ever bother you-or..." She blinked down at him as she came to a stop, now standing in front of him. He wasn't trying to run... probably knew he couldn't get away even if he did. "Or any other faunus again! Plea-" his words were cut off for the last time as her heel punctured a hole into his neck, leaving him gasping as blood squirted out from the wound, staining his clothes a dark red. A few seconds after though he stopped moving, his entire body going still even as the blood continued to flow.

She hesitated there. The first one she had managed just fine, but the second... Damn it. She couldn't be screwing up now, but... but this wasn't suppose to happen. If this was going to happen it shouldn't have happened this soon. She should have had more time to-to-

The sound of clapping shatters her thoughts even further. Velvet turns slowly to see the faunus first, wearing a White Fang mask with a pair of wolf ears sticking out from his black hood. Then her gaze lands on the human, the one that is clapping. She recognizes him instantly, as his face had been all over the news just the day before, showing his mug shots even though he wasn't in prison anymore. Roman Torchwick.



"Killed by dust bunnies." She wasn't sure what to make of the smile on his lips. "It could be the headline." Roman paused, taking a drag from a cigar, effectively ceasing the clapping that had thrown her off just a second ago. Her mind remained as clear as the sky above her, though. "If you were coming to join the White Fang you're late, darling. Not to mention you missed my speech. I practice it, but no one ever seems to appreciate it."

\_What? \_He's part of the White Fang? Or sponsoring it?

The faunus next to him finally spoke up, "You came to join the White Fang? Just how were you hoping to help us in our goals-"

He was cut off by Roman's hand waving in his face. "You're done tonight, remember? She's late." That hand was now pointing a finger at her. "Besides, you're suppose to be working for the White Fang right now." Somehow it sounded more like he was saying, \_you're suppose to be working for me right now\_.

An irritated growl came from the wolf faunus, but he turned away a moment later, glancing back at Velvet once before a turning a corner to head back to the warehouse district.

Roman turned back around to face her, taking another drag from his cigar and then blowing the smoke out a moment later. "You hesitated earlier." She couldn't stop her ears from twitching at this remark, especially on something she had hoped no one would notice. "Were those men the first humans you killed?"

She didn't say anything as her mind finally caught up to the current situation. Roman Torchwick had just ordered a member of the White Fang, so... he had to be with them, at least in some capacity. Velvet gave a nod of her head to his question. "Yes. That's correct."

"Hmm," the sound slid around the cigar in his mouth for a second, before he was throwing the stub onto the ground, leaving the embers on the end to glow against the concrete. "What's your name?"

"Primula."

\*\*I do not own Velvet's chosen outfit, it comes from the competition for her battle gear. Which can be seen [partially] on a pic I made for these two on my DeviantArt account (because I have to make things for rare pairs, apparently)\*\*

## 2. Chapter 2

\*\*Primula - 2\*\*

\*\*Yup, here's the second chapter. I will see this odd pairing through.\*\*

"As in the primrose?"

Velvet nodded her head at his question. The connection between the name she had chosen and the flower was rather obvious; so she wasn't

surprised by his observation. She would be more surprised if he hadn't noticed it. It wasn't the sort of name that one needed to think too hard about; to see just what colors it corresponded with. Unlike her teammate, Yatsushashi.

"I trust you don't need an introduction to know who I am."

"No," she assured him. Quite honestly she wasn't sure if it was possible for someone living in the Kingdoms to not know about him. As infamous as he was, even most of those living in villages and towns would know who he was; though, admittedly they wouldn't have had heard as much about him, being isolated as they were.

"Let's get going, then." Roman turned away with a flourish of his cane and began walking down the alley, back the way he had come with that wolf faunus.

Who was a member of the White Fang... unless they had stolen a uniform, but that made no sense. It didn't make sense why a terrorist organization hell bent on destroying humanity was working with a human, though. That they would give him authority over their own forces. The faunus hadn't seemed very happy about it, but they had followed his command anyway.

She was clearly missing something. A component that would make all of this snap together and actually start making sense. Something she would probably learn if she went with Roman.

He had told the faunus to go to work for the White Fang-

"We don't have all night, darling." She nearly jolted in place at the sound of Roman's voice. Her gaze snapped to him, looking back at her from near the corner of a building. Just the edge of his lip was pulled down, as if irritated, but seeing as he wasn't glaring at her she figured it must have something to do with that other faunus or the reason for him being here in the first place. Either way, she needed to actually make her legs move so she could walk over.

They were trembling; no, her whole body was after what she had just done. Actually killing two human beings, as awful as they had been she hadn't wanted to go that far. She had just wanted to get to the recruiting event before she missed it - stupid, stupid - and ended up killing two people instead. Though, she had tried to make their deaths swift, with minimal pain.

This was just not going according to her plan. She could only hope Roman Torchwick actually was involved with the White Fang somehow, otherwise she would end up wasting time and she wouldn't have made any progress in her mission.

"Are you coming or not?"

That cane of his hit the ground when he spoke and she forced her left leg to bend, just slightly. Velvet drew some air into her body through her nose, forcing herself not to look back at those men she had killed. They could have been acting like that because of the alcohol; maybe, she could hope. But then someone might miss them... or they could have nobody important in their lives; she hated herself for hoping that was the case. She didn't want to have had to take away someone from their family all because she was late.

Her teeth slipped over her lip, pressing into the flesh for a moment before she gave another nod of her head. She didn't trust herself to speak at the moment; so she took one step forward, and then another, until she was standing in front of Roman.

He had taken out another cigar as he waited for her, lighting it and was now taking a long drag from it. The smoke curled in the air around him when he blew it back out; the smell made her nose twitch, it stung. "It'll pass."

"What?" the question just slipped from her lips when he made such a comment. Though, she had an idea of just what he was talking about.

"Whatever you're feeling from killing those two gutter rats; it'll pass."

Gutter rats? She supposed it described those two rather well, but she didn't want to just 'let it pass.' She had had taken on this mission to stop the deaths of faunus \_and\_ humans, not to cause more. And she certainly didn't want to get use to killing people, even if her mission required it. It felt wrong to just... shrug a life off like that.

"Stop thinking about it so much." Velvet blinked up at him, wondering if he was reading her mind. Or if her thoughts and emotions were just that apparent on her face, highlighted through her body motions. This was one of the reasons she questioned Ozpin's decision to send her on a covert mission like this. She wasn't socially awkward, but she didn't have much of a poker face, and she wouldn't be winning a trophy for her acting skills anytime soon. "You came here to join the White Fang, didn't you?"

"Yes," her answer was instant, because it was her \_mission\_. If it wasn't she wouldn't be showing any interest in the terrorist organization; she wouldn't have been able to just walk up and infiltrate the place without Ozpin asking her to. As a faunus she was sympathetic to their \_cause\_, not their methods.

Honestly, she wanted to stop them - not that Roman needed to know that; she really should work on suppressing her emotions so they weren't so noticeable or her mission wouldn't last for very long. She had just wanted to stop them without using their own methods; she certainly hadn't wanted to join them through killing, but that was when the wolf faunus had taken more of an interest in her. When she showed she had the skill to kill quickly and efficiently. It was probably something Roman appreciated as well.

She was surrounded by a group of murderers and a criminal, neither of which being something she wanted to become.

"Then don't act so upset over killing a pair of humans, especially ones like those. It's not like their kind is restricted to my species. There's just as many in your own. If you had been attacked by them you would have defended yourself sooner, wouldn't you?" His head tilted only slightly, but she realized then that him and the faunus must have heard at least part of her initial encounter with those men.

How stupid could she possibly be? "I didn't realize I had missed the meeting. I thought I could still get there in time, that there was no reason to draw attention to myself-"

"No reason? Darling, you don't exactly dress the part of someone who wants to be inconspicuous."

"The White Fang have a standard uniform... what's so funny?" she asked, when he started laughing shortly after she tried to explain.

It was a low chuckle that he drew out before answering her question, holding the cigar loosely between his lips before transferring it to his fingers. "You would exchange that." He gestured with his cigar to her outfit. "For a uniform?" Roman leaned forward as he was suddenly looking over the material, the stitching, and the color with a critical eye. "Where did you get your Dust imbued clothing to such specifications?"

"I made it," Velvet replied, ears twitching when the corner of his lip turned up. "I figured the mask would do for a 'uniform,'" she admitted.

Ozpin had been the one to suggest she make a new weapon and uniform so if anyone had seen her using her weapon before or walking around in her battle gear they wouldn't recognize her with a glance. It's just... she had gone overboard with her clothing design - not to mention her weapon - she didn't really want to get rid of it when she joined up with the White Fang. Even if traditionally only those at the top didn't wear the standard gear the White Fang provided. She had made too many enhancements that she hadn't gotten the chance to use except for in the designated training area she had scouted during her second semester.

Her fingers tugged lightly on the fur hem of her skirt, which didn't really have any unique properties itself, but she had enjoyed creating the design. Just because it didn't have dust weaved into it didn't mean it couldn't help with her chosen fighting style. Besides, it was elegant without being daring.

The moment her lips twitched up into a smile Roman's voice broke through her thoughts once again. "I told you it would pass." He was grinning at her when he spoke, "Just don't spare any thought for them next time. It's that simple. You should enjoy life, not get hung up on it."

Her fingers froze on the hem of the skirt. To have just forgotten about the two bodies behind her so easily... it wasn't... No, it was necessary. He was right, she couldn't get hung up over every little death she caused, directly or not, especially with her chosen mission. She didn't have that luxury, not when she was aiming to save lives by doing this.

She could feel the last bit of tension finally leave her body as she took a step back so she didn't have to tilt her head so far to meet Roman's gaze. "Thank you."

Roman chuckled softly as he began to raise his cigar back to his lips-

The sound of police sirens could be heard in the distance, but Velvet didn't recall hearing anyone pass by the alley to see two dead humans. It was possible they were just heading in this general direction rather than their exact location. Unless someone - human or faunus - knew about the White Fang's recruiting event going on tonight and had called it in, though admittedly they would be too late to stop it.

"Ah." Roman was scowling when he spoke, "Time to go." He threw the still burning cigar at the wall, switching his cane to his other hand. She could feel those very fingers wrap around her elbow an instant later, pulling her after him as he walked around the corner into a wider alleyway.

Velvet stumbled after him for a few seconds, adjusting her ears to follow the sirens as they gradually got closer. Since they weren't speeding she guessed they were only trying to get to the aftermath; that whatever had been called in to pique their interest in the area had happened some time ago.

When she turned back to face forward she didn't have any worries about the Vale Police finding them in the area. There was a bullhead laying dormant between a pair of warehouses, a few members of the White Fang standing close by. But once the faunus saw her and Roman they began to disappear into the bullhead, the engine turning on moments later.

"Tch." The grinding of Roman's teeth drew her attention back to him. "\_Now\_ they choose to move their tails."

Roman was the first to step onto the bullhead, Velvet following closely behind to hear the door \_clang\_ shut behind her. The metal floor seemed to shudder as the roar of the engine grew louder. She could feel the floor tilt beneath her as the bullhead began to ascend into the sky and took the few steps forward necessary so she could sit down on a bench melded into the wall.

"Check that you have the correct coordinates before you head off in a random direction." Roman had let go of her to poke his head into the cockpit, snapping at the faunus piloting the airship. "Or do you actually remember where we're going this time?"

"I know where the Vale White Fang base is, sir."

"So those ridiculous ears of yours \_are\_ working today. Lovely." Roman let out a snort before pulling away from the cockpit, sitting next to Velvet an instant later. "You'll have to excuse that one's stupidity," he said, seemingly looking through his pockets for another cigar.

She had to wonder just how many he went through when he hadn't even technically finished the second one. It was still in the alley, not that it mattered. Even if they were of a certain brand she doubted the police could connect him to the crime scene she had created just because there were two cigars in the area. Those bodies were lying right outside of a strip club, there was plenty more cigars, cigarettes, and broken beer bottles on the concrete.

Would Ozpin make the connection? Would he realize she was the one to kill those two? There was no evidence to connect her to the scene,

but even so... she hoped he didn't.

There was an annoyed grunt to her left, telling her he hadn't managed to find another cigar. Well... he hadn't been unpleasant - to her - and every part of a cigar could be made from tobacco; a plant. Plus, he might be willing to talk to her about the actual operations going on currently in Vale if he had one.

Velvet pushed her aura from her back and into her weapon, sliding it into the earth dust compartment easily. She turned her hand over as she concentrated, manipulating the dust, moving just a pinch of it from her weapon and to her open palm. Once the dust was settled into her hand she curled her fingers around it, activating her aura so the dust would react to it. She could feel it expanding in her palm, the texture of leaves; she split most of them apart, leaving a few long leaves to wrap around the remains to create the 'paper' to keep it bound together. Once she was sure the dust was no longer reacting to her aura she slowly drew it out from object, sending a much smaller amount of fire dust around and down her arm to light the end of the makeshift cigar. It definitely wasn't going to be the best or any sort of top quality, but the tobacco inside was real, even if it had just been created from dust.

She opened her palm as she felt the embers of the cigar press into the curve of her thumb through the fabric of her gloves. "Here." Velvet said, moving her open palm towards him.

Roman didn't turn to her at first, checking his pocket again before turning his head; his brow rose slightly upon seeing the cigar in her hand, though. "You don't strike me as someone who smokes."

"I don't," she replied, about to ask if he wanted it or not; but his fingers slid around the cigar a moment later, raising it to his lips to inhale the smoke. Velvet watched him for a moment, feeling the metal of the ship vibrate beneath her as it flew through the air. "Why are we going to the Vale White Fang base?" When she noticed the corner of his lip twitch up at her question she had to stop herself from cursing out loud. She was dealing with a criminal here, he knew every trick in the book and more, going by such a textbook technique to get information was... "Just curious," she added on, not too quickly. Just like a person that wouldn't have the common sense to realize they had just been an idiot, if they were trying to get information from a notorious criminal of all people.

Roman breathed the smoke from the cigar back out into the air, chuckling softly when his gaze slid to her. "Are you trying to bribe me with a cigar you made from earth dust?"

"No." Okay, she may have said \_that \_too quickly.

She felt herself relax though when Roman merely smiled at her. "I'm getting some semi-more competent men for the gigs I'm running around town. The last batch I got was from in the city, and they were worthless. I would return them to their employer, but they're not in the condition I bought them in."

Huh. That implied there was more crime going around town than the news was reporting these days, or that these 'gigs' of his were going to take off very soon. It was vague as hell as well, but... "So you do work with the White Fang."

"Mhm." He just hummed the sound out from around the cigar in his mouth.

She still couldn't quite hide her surprise at that fact. A human working with the White Fang, as if it were an every day occurrence. Velvet shifted slightly in her seat. She actually needed to become a part of the White Fang so she could start her mission in a more official sense. "I know I was late to the recruiting event-"

"Stop right there." Roman jerked the cigar in her direction when he spoke, having pulled the cigar out of his mouth soon after she began to speak. "Once we get to the local White Fang base I'll be the one to judge if you'll be staying there or coming back into the city. I'm running the show here, not the mutts down there. If you can deal with more than a couple lowlives you'll be coming back into the city with me." He held the cigar loosely in his fingers as it hovered next to his mouth. "So if you can prove that; you can consider yourself an unofficial member of the White Fang, if you really feel the need to be connected with them." Roman went back to smoking his cigar as Velvet fell silent.

She was still processing what he had told her when the bullhead shuddered and a call came from the cockpit, "We're here, boss."

"Finally." Roman stood up a moment later, dropping the burning end of the cigar to the metal floor. The edge of his cane crushed the remains of it into the metal with a few twists of his wrist as the door to the bullhead slid open. "Get up, darling. I have to make a stop, but I'm sure Flin would like to have a word with you."

"Flin?" Velvet asked as she got up from the bench, but Roman was already off the ship. With a glance at the other faunus inside the bullhead Velvet departed moments after him, following not too far behind.

The faunus at the camp were practically tripping over their feet to get out of Roman's path as he made a beeline to one of the tents, one marked with a red symbol depicting a faunus and a human grappling with each other.

She ducked beneath the flap of the tent before it could completely slide back closed after Roman had pull it open with the hook of his cane, glancing around the inside of the tent. There were weapons everywhere, nothing too unique as they had to be standard gear for the White Fang, given to those that didn't have a weapon - which was most of them, especially when they first joined. Guns and blade made up most of the arsenal, with basic designs. There were a few guns that looked to have been stolen from the Atlesian Army as well.

"So, did you find me anyone that can do the job?"

A curtain at the far end of the tent that must serve as some sort-of 'door' \_swished \_open and a faunus only wearing the standard gear from the waist down appeared. There were two belts criss-crossing over his rather defined chest to form an x, the slots of which were filled with ammo and dust crystals. "A few dozen. They're out back." The faunus' voice was gruff, so low it was practically a growl. On his head were too small curved brown ears; a bear faunus. "Is this

the one Alpine told me about?"

"Probably," Roman said, stepping around a table that held cases - which she presumed to hold even more weapons. "Are you sure the men you picked out are competent?"

"If they're not you can beat their heads in until they are."

Roman laughed as he moved towards the back 'door.' "This is why I like you, Flin."

As Roman disappeared through the flaps of the tent Velvet wished she could follow him as she felt Flin's eyes wander up and down her body. "You look too soft to be a soldier. Do you have any training at all kit?"

"I grew up outside the Kingdoms," she replied, unable to make her voice \_snap \_at him the same way he had just done to her. "I've had plenty of unconventional training."

"Yeah." Flin rolled his eyes as he moved towards one of the weapon cases. "We'll see about that. What sort of weapon do you favor?" He was already unlocking the case and she felt her blood actually boil slightly at the way he just shoved her off.

"I have a weapon, but thank you for your consideration." This time she managed to add some bite to her words.

But when he turned around, eyes narrowing as he searched her for a more concealed weapon and began laughing she could feel the bile rising in her throat. "If you really want to be torn up by a couple Grimm, maybe. You sure you don't want a real weapon, little girl?"

"No." Perhaps she hadn't made her weapon to be very frightening - if at all - but, she didn't appreciate the way Flin was brushing her off without even seeing her fight.

"Then follow me so you can be eaten by some Grimm before any real fighter has time to intervene."

She didn't have any sort of retort ready so just remained silent as she followed him out the back of the tent, moving across an open field to what looked to be a stadium built from the trees that use to inhabit the area. There were a few faunus on the ground, groaning and in apparent pain - those that Roman hadn't cared for, probably. But she didn't see him anywhere.

Just where had he disappeared to?

He had mentioned judging her abilities himself. How was he suppose to do that if he wasn't in the area when she was being tested? Velvet frowned at Flin's back as he threw the doors open to what she could only guess was an arena of sorts; if she were going off how it was shaped and what he had said before bringing her here.

Velvet followed Flin up a number of stairs until they came to a box overlooking the arena. She felt her shoulders lower when Roman turned his head to look at her from one of the seats, tipping his hat in greeting. "There you are. I was wondering if Flin had scared you



off."

What... of course. He had left her with Flin because he knew the weapon specialist - or whatever his role in the White Fang was called - would push at her buttons. He wanted her angry so he knew she would fight for real. So she could prove Flin wrong; that she was capable of fighting and that her weapon wasn't something one laughed at.

"I'm sure the Grimm will be too scared to fight when they see her 'weapon.'" Flin responded before she could, causing her eyes to narrow a second later.

"Where's the Grimm I'm suppose to fight?"

"They'll be in there in a moment." Flin jerked his head towards the arena, moving towards something that looked like a dashboard. "We'll begin in a minute. So get down there."

Velvet drew in a breath through clenched teeth before she advanced towards the balcony. She didn't bother grabbing the edge, just stepped right onto it to step forward into empty air a second later. So she was falling through the air in seconds, with the wind whistling around her as she fell until the toes of her heels connected with the ground and she kicked hard against the dirt. Practically throwing herself to the center of the arena.

She could hear Flin from where she stood even now, making a snide remark of having meant the stairs. Along with the pushing of buttons as he continued to speak about just sending one, maybe two Grimm at a time for her. But then she could hear Roman as her ears twitched, focusing on their conversation.

"How am I suppose to tell if she could survive an encounter with a hunter if you go easy on her?"

"I could send three in at a time. That ought to kill her, if that's what you want."

"Three is on the low side of the spectrum. Try sending a dozen ursa first, when she kills them you can send something that might actually be a challenge."

"Do you actually believe that? Or do you just want to see a rabbit get torn to pieces?"

"If you don't send them in I will."

Velvet blinked a moment later when four lights came on simultaneously, nearly blinding her with their sudden harsh bright light. She could no longer listen in to the conversation as she heard any faunus watching begin to chatter among-st themselves. There was too much noise to pinpoint them again, and they were too far for her to be able to hear them over everyone else.

Who fell silent when the swinging of doors met her ears, along with growls. So it was starting then, but she was finding it a bit hard to see, even as the lights began to dim. If she wanted to go back to the city she couldn't hold back by the sound of things. There was more Grimm entering the arena than just a few, at least half a dozen, but

she was sure there would be more from the direction Flin and Roman's conversation had been going in. Velvet closed her eyes as she heard the Grimm approach...

\_Release.\_

Velvet let go of her hardened aura as she surged forward towards the now frozen boarbatusk, the scarlet glow from her stockings reflecting off it's crystallized fur, a tusk-

That shattered the moment her knee found it's mark beneath the Grimm's chin. Her momentum carried her through the ice fragments to where her weapon was now laying immobile on the ground. She slammed her left knee into the dirt, to stop her movement and use her aura to move her weapon back to it's original place on her back before she stood up, turning around to check that that had been the last Grimm, gaze landing where she had been standing last.

The center of the arena had a circular barren ground, that was outlined by charred earth and the nearly dissolved corpses of Ursa, thick smoke still rising up from their burnt fur. Not too far was the body of a beowolf, a thin hole through it's neck still view-able. Along the rest of the ground of the arena were various burn marks from fire or ice, a Grimm corpse not too far from each one. The only irregularity of the originally flat dirt was a stalagmite sticking out of the ground to the west; the heads of a king taijitu on one side of it, the long body of the snake on the other. A horde of Creeps were laying on the dirt as well: legs cut off, bodies split in half, tails severed.

She took a step forward, wondering if that was it. If she had proven herself enough when she heard the engine of a bullhead above her. Velvet tilted her head back to look up as she heard Roman's voice call down from the airship, "Have an emergency, Flin. Make sure you send those men."

What? He was leaving? How much of the fight had he even seen? She was suppose to go back into the city, she was suppose to learn just what the White Fang were doing, she was suppose to-

She could see Roman begin to duck back into the ship and took one step forward, her left stocking began to glow and as she took another step her right stocking glowed as well. Velvet bent her knees once the kinetic energy had been collected, shoving off from the dirt and into the air, rising at least thirty meters to have her heels slam into the metal floor of the bullhead a second later.

Roman's head whipped around just as the metal door slid back into place behind her. For a second he was silent, his gaze moving down to her stockings as the glow from the dust imbued fabric began to fade, then back up to meet her own eyes. His lips curved into a grin. "You're certainly not a pawn."

End  
file.